Chapter 1
Cognitive Style:
Decision Making

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the unique role of cognitive style decision making by digging into knowledge taken from different models and theories by different researchers and indicators developed by different authors. To understand the cognitive style, different models and theories were discussed in this chapter. The aim of this chapter is to give deep understanding of cognitive styles. Different theories and models from pieces of literature are explored. Based on a thorough review, this conceptual paper/chapter is given.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to review cognitive style theories in particular from Allinson and Hayes (1996). In doing so, various definitions of cognitive style are considered and the definition of cognitive style adopted in this study is described (*Defining Cognitive Style*). The emergence of cognitive style which include three key models of cognitive style: Adaption-Innovation (Kirton, 1976), Wholist-Analytical/Verbaliser-Imager (Riding, 1991) and Intuition and Analysis (Allinson & Hayes, 1996) are described (*The Emergence of Cognitive Style Study*). The discussion moves on to dimensions and measurements available for assessing cognitive style that emphasizes on Allinson and Hayes (1996) Intuition and Analysis (*Dimensions and Measurements of Cognitive Style*). A section focuses on the rationale of selecting CSI as instrument measure also outlined (*CSI Selection and Rational*). Link on various studies of cognitive style and leadership are also reviewed (*The Link Between Cognitive Style and Leadership Effectiveness*). A summary is provided at the end (*Conclusion*).

DEFINING COGNITIVE STYLE

Cognitive style is getting attention nowadays in the pursuit of the understanding of leadership effectiveness in the organisation (Hayes & Allinson, 1994; Hodgkinson & Healey, 2008). This exploration is importance especially on the role of cognitive style which identifies individual differences in information processing styles, and their relationship with transformational and transactional leadership approaches to determine leadership effectiveness. In fact, the increased attentions of cognitive style in work and organisation over the last decades have enriching the management and organisational psychology literature (Hayes & Allinson, 1994; Sadler-Smith &Badger, 1998; Hodgkinson & Sadler-Smith, 2003). The importance of cognitive variables inclusion in leadership research has long been implicitly pointed out by Fiedler (1981: 631) as he noted:

…..The preoccupation of leadership research with affective rather than cognitive variables: the leader's style, motivation, attitudes, perception of others, and relation with others. While these affective variables undoubtedly play an important part in the leader's behavior and performance, we cannot afford to ignore the equally important part played by the leader's knowledge, ability to solve problems, to learn, and to make sound judgments…it is to be hoped that these important variables will be restored to their rightful place in leadership theory.

Cognitive style has been defined in various ways especially in education and experimental psychology (Grigorenko & Sternberg, 1995; Riding, 1997). In the psychology literature cognitive style has been widely recognised as an important determinant of individual behaviour (Sadler-Smith & Badger, 1998) which has been identified as a high-level heuristic that controls behaviour across situations to solve problems (Brighmam, De Castro, & Shepherd, 2007; Kickul, Gundry, Barbosa, & Whitcanack, 2009). A definition of cognitive style as described by Messick (1984: 5) is "consistent individual differences in preferred ways of organising and processing information and experience". It shows how people have their own "individual characteristics" way of perceiving, gathering, processing and using information and problem solving (Armstrong & Cools, 2009; Messick, 1996; Tennant, 1988). Individual characteristics such as cognitive style may influence leadership effectiveness. However, the basic notion of cognitive styles as how individual differ in term of receiving, gathering, interpreting and using information is reflected in the following definitions:

- Cross (1976) refers to cognitive style as the characteristic ways of using the mind.

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